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General and complete disarmament

Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures

Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report describes activities undertaken by States and regional and subregional organizations to consolidate peace through practical disarmament measures.

It also summarizes the activities undertaken at the national, regional and subregional levels by the United Nations, States and organizations that are in a position to do so to provide assistance to States in their efforts to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and in collecting and disposing of them.

In addition, it provides an overview of the implementation by the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and States of General Assembly resolution 62/47, on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, including the work of the Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

* A/63/150 and Corr.1.

** The late submission of the present report is due to the fact that its completion was contingent upon the outcome of the Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

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The report covers the period from July 2007 to July 2008, except for the section on the consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures, which covers the period from July 2006 to July 2008.

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I. Introduction

1. Convinced that a comprehensive and integrated approach to certain practical disarmament measures is often a prerequisite to maintaining and consolidating peace and security, in its resolution 61/76, entitled "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures", the General Assembly encouraged Member States, including the Group of Interested States, to continue to lend their support to the Secretary-General, relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, and non-governmental organizations, in responding to requests by Member States to collect and destroy small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, in post-conflict situations. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit, for its consideration at its sixty-third session, a report on the implementation of practical disarmament measures, taking into consideration the activities of the Group of Interested States in this regard.

2. Deeply concerned by the magnitude of human casualty and suffering, especially among children, caused by the illicit proliferation and use of small arms and light weapons in its resolution 62/22, entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them", the General Assembly invited the Secretary-General and those States and organizations that are in a position to do so to continue to provide assistance to States to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to consider the matter and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session.

3. Emphasizing the importance of the continued and full implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects,[1] adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in its resolution 62/47, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects", the General Assembly called upon all Member States to contribute to the continued implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels. It also called upon all States to implement the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (International Tracing Instrument)[2] and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its sixty-third session on the implementation of the resolution.

4. The present report is submitted pursuant to the requests made by the General Assembly in the above-mentioned resolutions.

II. Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures

5. The present section of the report covers the period from July 2006 to July 2008. During the reporting period, the Group of Interested States in Practical

[1] See *Report of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, New York, 9-20 July 2001* (A/CONF.192/15), chap. IV, para. 24.

[2] A/60/88 and Corr.2, annex; see also General Assembly decision 60/519.

Disarmament Measures held three meetings, on 13 July 2006, 16 October 2007 and 26 March 2008. At its 2006 meeting the Group reviewed its mandate in the light of the overlap with some of the activities included in the Programme of Action. The Group decided to extend its assistance to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are involved in projects dealing with practical disarmament measures. In this connection, during the same meeting, the Group considered a request for assistance from the African Peace Forum, an NGO that was conducting a project on training in small arms, as part of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in Southern Sudan. The project subsequently received funding from the Governments of Canada and Germany.

6. At its 2007 meeting, the Group of Interested States resolved to refocus on its original activities. These include the examination of and, where possible, provision of joint support for concrete projects for practical disarmament, in particular disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, weapons collection programmes, demining, conversion and public awareness campaigns as initiated and designed by affected countries. The Group engages in exchanging information on lessons learned in the field of practical disarmament and their dissemination to interested States.

7. In this regard, the Group decided to develop two lists, one showing donor-preferred areas for funding and the second showing projects from countries that need funding. The objective of the lists was to match donor countries with recipient countries. This concept was later incorporated in the Programme of Action Implementation Support System, developed by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, with partial funding from the Trust Fund for the Consolidation of Peace through Practical Disarmament Measures, which was established by the Secretary-General in 1998 to support the activities of the Group of Interested States.

8. At its meeting in March 2008, the Group of Interested States considered a funding proposal from the Nairobi-based Regional Centre on Small Arms to support various practical disarmament projects in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and the Sudan.

9. Meanwhile, in response to a request from the Secretariat for information on activities undertaken in the area of practical disarmament measures, 12 States[3] submitted reports that included information on assistance received or extended in the following areas: capacity-building of national institutions dealing with small arms and light weapons; collection and destruction of surplus and illicit small arms and light weapons; destruction and demilitarization of ammunition; support for civil society with a view to enhancing its capacity to assist in combating illicit small arms and light weapons; support for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in some of the countries emerging from conflict; and the disarmament of illegal armed groups in countries that are not in conflict.

10. In addition to assistance extended by some members of the Group of Interested States, during the reporting period, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provided support to over 15 States worldwide in the area of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Additionally, it initiated and led several joint missions with other United Nations agencies and departments in the fields of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform, gender and

[3] Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, Greece, Jordan, Lebanon, Mexico, Netherlands, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Serbia and Ukraine.

early recovery, thus increasing synergies between country programmes. In the Sudan, UNDP, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) coordinated their efforts in supporting the set-up stages of a national strategy for four specific disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, which will be complemented by community security and small arms control initiatives.

III. Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them

11. During the reporting period, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs continued to support the Sri Lanka National Commission against the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms, through a joint project under the auspices of the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) mechanism. In the framework of this project, during the reporting period the Sri Lanka National Commission undertook the following activities: a national small arms and light weapons survey, designed and implemented in partnership with Saferworld; the design and launch of a database of firearms in civilian possession; and the organization of a series of seminars aimed at raising awareness among police organizations in various provinces of the country on issues related to small arms and light weapons. It is expected that a national action plan will be developed on the basis of the recommendations from the national small arms and light weapons survey. During the reporting period, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime also provided support to the Guinea-Bissau National Commission on Small Arms, in the framework of another project under the auspices of CASA. The two projects, both of which were funded through voluntary contributions from the Government of Japan, run from 2003 to 2008 and from 2007 to 2010, respectively.

12. Through its United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, the Office for Disarmament Affairs assisted the Togolese National Commission against Small Arms with the destruction of illicit ammunition. In addition, the Centre provided technical assistance for a subregional project launched in 2007 by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Small Arms Control Programme in Togo. The project is aimed at sensitizing the population to the dangers posed by small arms and light weapons, strengthening the capacity of the National Commission in record-keeping and stockpile management, and assisting in the conduct of surveys on the circulation of arms and their impact in Togo.[4]

13. Meanwhile, in a concerted effort to assist the Government of Jamaica in the elaboration and implementation of a comprehensive national strategy to reduce armed violence and curb illicit firearms trafficking, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, through its Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, conducted a series of courses and workshops for civil society organizations and community leaders in Jamaica, held in November and December 2007 and May 2008. The Centre also carried out the first-of-its-kind

[4] See A/63/163.

firearms baseline study in Jamaica, aimed at enhancing the training of the law enforcement community in the country, as well as generating inputs for other activities related to the implementation of the Jamaican national security policy programme supported by UNDP and the Regional Centre. In addition, the Regional Centre assisted the Government of Peru in removing close to 20,000 firearms from circulation. It also provided technical assistance to the Governments of Paraguay and Uruguay on best practices in stockpile management and security in storage facilities, including through the provision of guidelines on safe and secure integrated management of storage facilities.[5]

IV. Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

A. United Nations system

Security Council

14. In a presidential statement issued on 29 June 2007[6] the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to submit for its consideration a report on small arms containing his analysis, observations and recommendations, as well as his observations on the implementation of the Programme of Action. On 30 April 2008, the Council held an open debate at which it considered the Secretary-General's report on small arms (S/2008/258).[7] The report focused on the negative impact of illicit small arms on security, human rights and social and economical development, in particular in areas of crisis and (post-) conflict situations, and provided an analysis of the implementation of existing international instruments for preventing the illicit proliferation of small arms, such as the Programme of Action and the United Nations Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition (United Nations Firearms Protocol).

15. The report outlined a series of recommendations, in respect of such matters as the development of measurable goals for reducing armed violence; fostering enhanced cooperation between national authorities; enhancing synergies between various bodies on the issue, including the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission; exploring possibilities for further improving the monitoring of Security Council arms embargoes; developing forms of standardization of end-user certificates and improving their verification; drawing urgent attention to the issues of destruction of surplus ammunition stockpiles and stockpile management; capacity-building; and the further strengthening of coordination on the issue within the United Nations system.

16. The debate reaffirmed the relevance of small arms as a cross-cutting issue for the majority of matters considered by the Security Council. In addition to the open debate on small arms, the Council also held a number of debates on other issues

[5] See A/63/157.

[6] S/PRST/2007/24.

[7] See S/PV.5881 and resumption 1.

with a small arms nexus, such as children and armed conflict, civilians and armed conflict, and women and peace and security.

General Assembly

17. By its resolution 62/47, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to collate and circulate data and information provided by States on a voluntary basis, including national reports on their implementation of the Programme of Action (see para. 3 above) and on the International Tracing Instrument, as well as information received on the efforts of States to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons and on actions aimed at enhancing international cooperation for that purpose. Pursuant to that request, the Office for Disarmament Affairs received a total of 109 reports during the reporting period, of which 104 also included information on the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument, while 84 also included information on activities related to curbing illicit brokering.[8]

Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

18. In its resolution 62/47, the General Assembly decided to convene a Third Biennial Meeting of States to consider the national, regional and global implementation of the Programme of Action, in New York, from 14 to 18 July 2008. In the same resolution, the Assembly also decided that the meeting of States to consider the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument would be held within the framework of the Biennial Meeting. The Third Biennial Meeting was chaired by Dalius Čekuolis, Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations.

19. That Biennial Meeting was the first of the global follow-up meetings under the Programme of Action to produce a substantive outcome.[9] The outcome highlights various recommendations as a "way forward" for the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action. The Biennial Meeting also produced an outcome document on the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument, which was included as an annex to the report of the Meeting.

20. Consideration of the implementation of the Programme of Action was conducted through interactive discussions centred on the following items: (a) international cooperation, assistance and national capacity-building; (b) stockpile management and surplus disposal; (c) illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons; and (d) other issues, including those mentioned in paragraph 18 of the report of the Second Biennial Meeting of States,[10] and the identification of priority issues or topics of relevance to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and of their implementation challenges and opportunities.

21. Under the agenda item "International cooperation, assistance and national capacity-building", States discussed the efforts undertaken by recipient and donor

[8] The national reports are available on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs (http://disarmament.un.org/CAB/salw-nationalreports.html).

[9] See A/CONF.192/BMS/2008/3, para. 24.

[10] A/CONF.192/BMS/2005/1.

States to promote information exchange, practical cooperation, national experiences and lessons learned, as well as the role played by international, regional, subregional and civil society organizations in providing assistance to States in building their capacity for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action. They also considered steps to enhance multilateral mechanisms for matching needs with available resources. In this regard, States stressed the importance of regional approaches to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the usefulness of convening regional meetings sponsored by States and international, regional and subregional organizations that are in a position to do so. They also encouraged the active involvement of civil society organizations in such meetings.

22. In addition, States highlighted a number of measures that they considered essential for the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action, such as enhancing practical cooperation among law enforcement, judicial, border and customs agencies; facilitating technology transfer and the implementation of regional instruments; and the need for recipient States to develop the capacity to assess their assistance needs.

23. Under the agenda item "Stockpile management and surplus disposal", States recognized that poorly managed and inadequately secured stockpiles pose a serious security threat. In this respect, they stressed the need for raising awareness among relevant national authorities of the critical importance of putting in place adequate systems and procedures for national stockpile management. States also highlighted a number of measures to improve stockpile management, including revising national stockpile management policies and putting in place adequate stockpile management systems; enhancing cooperation and the exchange of information on national experiences; the development of practical guidelines for national stockpile management; and the provision of technical and financial support to build the capacity of affected States to adequately manage their stockpiles of small arms and light weapons.

24. Regarding illicit brokering, States reaffirmed that the problem of illicit brokering needed to be urgently addressed by the international community. In this regard, they underscored the need to implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons.[11] They further underscored a number of measures for the way forward, including the development of adequate national legislation or administrative procedures regulating brokering activities; international cooperation and assistance; and national capacity-building to address the problem. States also undertook to consider working to implement the recommendations of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on illicit brokering in order to reach agreements and establish mechanisms to find effective solutions to the problem.

25. Under the agenda item "Other issues, including those issues mentioned in paragraph 18 of the report of the Second Biennial Meeting of States (A/CONF.192/BMS/2005/1), and identification of priority issues or topics of relevance in the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and of their implementation challenges and opportunities", States expressed views on a wide range of issues that they consider of importance for the implementation of the

[11] A/62/163 and Corr.1.

Programme of Action. They also emphasized the importance of national reporting for the full implementation of the Programme of Action. In addition, they considered various ideas and proposals for a forward-looking implementation agenda for the Programme of Action, including: reporting on a biennial basis; the development of reporting templates and the analysis of reports; and follow-up meetings on the Programme of Action, including meetings of governmental experts and regional meetings that could be used to support future United Nations meetings on the Programme of Action.

International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons

26. During the discussion on the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument, States considered the extent to which they had succeeded in enacting national regulations and procedures for marking small arms and light weapons at the time of their manufacture and/or importation. They underscored that the marking of small arms and light weapons at the time of import could greatly facilitate the tracing of illicit weapons and called for assistance to be provided to non-manufacturing States. It was noted that a number of States had sought assistance to improve their national record-keeping capacity, particularly in terms of acquiring relevant hardware and software, as well as training in records management. With regard to cooperation in tracing, States welcomed the fact that a significant number of countries had nominated national points of contact for the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument. They also highlighted the importance of training law enforcement officials in the identification and tracing of small arms. They emphasized the importance of international cooperation and assistance, in particular national capacity-building for the effective implementation of the International Tracing Instrument.

27. With a view to ensuring the full and effective implementation of the International Tracing Instrument, States agreed to a number of measures, including: bringing national laws, regulations and administrative procedures into line with the Instrument; including in the national reports, as appropriate, information on national experiences in tracing illicit small arms and light weapons; supporting the role of the United Nations in promoting the Instrument and in building national capacity; supporting the role of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) in assisting in the implementation of the Instrument, including further development and promotion of the INTERPOL Weapons and Explosives Tracking System and other mechanisms aimed at facilitating tracing; making use of and supporting the web-based Programme of Action Implementation Support System (see para. 7 above); and cooperating with civil society in efforts to advance the implementation of the Instrument.

28. In an effort to promote the International Tracing Instrument, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, in collaboration with INTERPOL, organized four regional workshops aimed at enhancing understanding of the implications for States of the provisions of the Instrument; familiarizing relevant officials with some of the technical tools available for assisting States in tracing illicit small arms and light weapons, including those tools developed by INTERPOL; exchanging national experiences; and initiating an assessment of national assistance needs for the implementation of the Instrument. The workshops, which covered a total of 77 States, were held as follows: 10 and 11 December 2007, in Nairobi, for States of

North, East and Southern Africa; 17 and 18 April 2008, in Lomé, for States of West and Central Africa; 27 and 28 May 2008, in Seoul, for States of Asia and the Pacific; and 11 and 12 June 2008, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for States of Latin America and the Caribbean.

29. Financial support for the workshops was provided by the European Union and the Governments of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Japan, Norway and the Republic of Korea. The Governments of the Republic of Korea and of Brazil hosted and co-organized the workshop for Asia and the Pacific and the workshop for Latin America and the Caribbean, respectively. In addition, both Governments contributed expertise to the workshops.

30. At the conclusion of each of the above-mentioned workshops, participants noted that the workshops were very useful in raising awareness of the Instrument and in enhancing understanding of the actions that need to be carried out by States in order to fulfil their commitments under it. In this connection, they also expressed the wish that similar workshops be organized in the future with a view to enhancing the capacity of States to implement the Instrument.

United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms

31. During the reporting period, two important initiatives were launched under the auspices of the CASA mechanism: the development of the Programme of Action Implementation Support System, which succeeded the CASA database initiated in 2005, and the development of international small arms control standards, which are not unlike the international mine action standards and the integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration standards developed within the United Nations system. The Implementation Support System serves as an electronic "one-stop shop" for information on the implementation of the Programme of Action and as an integrated clearing house for international cooperation and assistance, including matching assistance needs with available resources. The development of the international small arms control standards is a two-year project aimed at developing a harmonized and holistic response to the numerous challenges posed by the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms. Such standards would improve the design, planning, implementation and monitoring of voluntary programmes and activities in the field of small arms control.

Office for Disarmament Affairs: regional centres

32. During the period under review, the Training the Trainers Public Security Project, which is being implemented by the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, expanded its scope to focus on border management and customs. Courses were held in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela from 19 to 30 November 2007 and in the Dominican Republic from 16 to 27 June 2008. Standardized courses on investigative techniques and regional information exchange were also carried out in Brazil, Colombia, Jamaica, Paraguay and Uruguay. In total, 1,100 officials from the seven States mentioned above received training during the reporting period. In addition, from 7 to 11 April 2008, the Regional Centre held its Regional Information Exchange Course in Bogotá, focusing on exchange of best practices on transparency measures, intelligence-gathering and regional cooperation. That course was attended

by law enforcement officials from States of Latin America and the Caribbean, the United States of America and Europe.

33. The Regional Centre also assisted Bolivia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Panama and Peru in the development of national firearms legislation and its harmonization with the various international firearms instruments. As a follow-up to the adoption in 2006 of the Geneva Declaration and in 2007 of the Declaration of Guatemala on Armed Violence and Development, the Centre, in collaboration with UNDP, organized a seminar for States of the Central American region in Antigua, Guatemala, from 28 to 30 April 2008, to exchange best practices on the implementation of the two Declarations. In November 2007, in partnership with the Organization of American States, the Centre organized a national workshop in Lima for 60 law enforcement officials involved in the verification and destruction of seized, decommissioned and surplus firearms. The workshop was followed by the destruction of more than 15,000 firearms between December 2007 and June 2008.

34. Meanwhile, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa continued collecting data on small arms and light weapons and maintained a regional database and Small Arms and Light Weapons Register for Africa, as a follow-up activity to the Small Arms Transparency and Control Regime in Africa project. In this regard, the Regional Centre encouraged participating States to submit reports on small arms and light weapons import, export and manufacture in order to promote transparency and confidence-building among African States.

35. On 20 and 21 September 2007, the Regional Centre held a training workshop for the Togolese National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons, focusing on best practices concerning marking, record-keeping and tracing in respect of small arms and light weapons. As a result of the workshop, these issues were included in the Togolese awareness campaign launched later in the year. On 24 September 2007, the Regional Centre organized a training workshop for the Togolese National Commission, focusing on stockpile management and security procedures. As a result of that workshop, the Togolese authorities requested assistance from the Government of the United States of America to build a storage facility and signed an agreement to that effect in July 2008. In addition, the Centre assisted the Togolese National Commission in the destruction of several thousand illicit arms and ammunition in an event that took place on 31 October 2007.

36. As part of its substantive secretariat support services to the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, the Regional Centre launched a project aimed at promoting the control of small arms and light weapons in the Central African region. The project, implemented in collaboration with the Economic Community of Central African States, is expected to result in 2009 in the adoption, by the 11 States members of the Standing Advisory Committee, of a legally binding instrument on small arms and an implementation plan. As part of its activities in support of civil society organizations, the Regional Centre provided capacity-building support to the West Africa Action Network on Small Arms through its participation in the review and validation process of the network's strategic plan for 2007-2017. The process culminated in a workshop held in Accra in December 2007.

Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate

37. The Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate continued monitoring the implementation by Member States of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), which stipulates that States shall eliminate the supply of weapons to terrorists. To this end, the Executive Directorate has developed a number of tools, including the preliminary implementation assessment, which is aimed at reducing the reporting burden of Member States. During the reporting period, the Counter-Terrorism Committee adopted 175 preliminary implementation assessments of Member States and conducted 27 on-site visits to Member States.

38. In addition, the Counter-Terrorism Committee held its fifth special meeting with international, regional and subregional organizations, on the theme "Prevention of terrorist movement and effective border security". The meeting, held in Nairobi from 29 to 31 October 2007, agreed on a plan of action by which participants decided to continue to work with Member States on the adoption and implementation of international standards to combat illegal arms trafficking and to eliminate the supply of weapons to terrorists.

United Nations Children's Fund

39. On 1 October 2007, UNICEF co-hosted with France a follow-up ministerial meeting on the Paris Commitments and Principles, adopted in February 2007. As a result of that meeting, an additional seven States expressed support for the Commitments, raising to 66 the number of States endorsing commitments for children associated with armed forces or armed groups. In March 2008, in partnership with the Jamaican Ministry of National Security, UNICEF, UNDP and the Violence Prevention Alliance co-hosted a multi-country consultation in Jamaica on the impact of small arms on children and their communities.

40. UNICEF continued to collaborate with partners in a number of States in programmes for the reintegration of demobilized child soldiers and war-affected children. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNICEF continued to support the protection of children through research and education on small arms and mine risk. Furthermore, UNICEF supported a four-country research project on the impact of small arms on children and adolescents in El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. The key findings provide evidence of the negative impact of small arms on children, make general and country-specific recommendations for action and outline best practices for interventions. The report calls for commitment by all actors to counter armed violence, support coordination and arms control measures, and provide treatment and rehabilitation of child victims. At the global level, the United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, which is chaired by UNICEF, developed a joint training strategy during the reporting period.

Department of Peacekeeping Operations

41. The integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration standards, a United Nations-wide set of policies, guidelines and tools for carrying out disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, were launched in December 2006. Since then, several challenges in the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes have come to light, including linking disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes with other post-conflict

peacebuilding and recovery efforts, such as initiatives on small arms control. In view of those challenges, a more holistic approach, known as community violence reduction, has been implemented. During the reporting period, the community violence reduction approach was used by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, with the aim of addressing the root causes of violence and fostering small arms control measures, such as the development of a weapons registry and an appropriate regulatory framework on small arms.

United Nations Development Fund for Women

42. As a part of the United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) continued to support the implementation of the United Nations integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration standards and related training initiatives. At the country level, UNIFEM continued to work with organizations of former female combatants on issues of gender-based violence prevention, economic security and HIV/AIDS. This has been the case particularly in the Great Lakes region of Africa, where UNIFEM has long-standing partnerships with women's organizations. In Uganda, for instance, the work of UNIFEM has focused primarily on supporting women's engagement in the peace process and on ensuring that gender equality measures and women's concerns are adequately reflected in implementation agreements for the post-conflict reconstruction phase, including in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plans. In Colombia, UNIFEM continued to support the compilation of good practices and lessons learned related to the impact of the disarmament process on women, both as former combatants and as members of returning communities.

United Nations Development Programme

43. UNDP provided extensive support to more than 30 countries worldwide to address the many challenges associated with the illicit trade and proliferation of small arms and light weapons. With a view to enhancing synergies in country programming, UNDP initiated and led several joint missions with other United Nations agencies and departments in the fields of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform, gender and early recovery. For instance, in the Sudan, UNDP, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNICEF coordinated their efforts to support the set-up stages of a national strategy for four specific disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, which will be complemented by community security and small arms control initiatives.

44. As a follow-up to the ministerial summit that adopted the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development in June 2006, the Swiss Government, with the support of UNDP, organized regional meetings in Antigua, Guatemala (April 2007), Nairobi (October 2007) and Bangkok (May 2008). The primary objective of these meetings was to promote the Geneva Declaration among States of the different regions and to increase awareness of the linkages between armed violence and the challenges to sustainable development.

United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

45. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) successfully completed its project on international assistance for the implementation

of the Programme of Action. The study surveyed the types of assistance that States would need to support their implementation of the Programme of Action. The third phase of the project, which is currently under way, is a web-based tool for matching assistance needs to available resources. This tool will be integrated into the Programme of Action Implementation Support System in the near future.

46. In support of the preparations for the Third Biennial Meeting of States, UNIDIR, in collaboration with UNDP, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Small Arms Survey, carried out an analysis of national reports on the implementation of the Programme of Action. The results of the analysis were presented in a draft report entitled "Implementing the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons: analysis of the national reports submitted by States from 2002 to 2008", which was included in the background documentation for the Biennial Meeting. Funding for this project was provided by the Governments of Japan and Switzerland.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

47. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime continued promoting the universal ratification of the United Nations Firearms Protocol and provided legislative and technical assistance to States seeking to ratify and implement it, including the development of guidelines to assist Member States with the implementation of the control measures outlined in the Protocol. During the period under review, 11 States joined the Protocol, bringing the total number of States parties to 72, as at May 2008.

48. In Colombia, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime continued the implementation of the project entitled "Preventing and combating the illicit manufacturing and trafficking in firearms and ammunition to prevent crime and promote a culture of peace in Colombia", which is aimed at helping to prevent crime through the strengthening of preventive measures on illicit manufacturing and trafficking in firearms and ammunition. Furthermore, the Office assisted the Colombian Government in the destruction of over 16,000 firearms that were seized or handed over by members of insurgent groups in the process of their reintegration into civil life. In addition, it worked in close cooperation with local authorities and youth organizations in the development of a national campaign to prevent violence.

49. In partnership with the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre and the South-Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime organized the Conference on Firearms Control Initiatives in South-East Europe, in Zagreb, from 22 to 24 April 2008. The purpose of the event was to provide a forum for States of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe to share national experiences in regulating and preventing the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms and ammunition and to assess the status of implementation of their obligations under the Firearms Protocol. Thirty-three senior officials representing 11 States of the subregion participated in the Conference. Also during the reporting period, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime began developing a programme to enhance understanding of the organized criminal networks involved in illicit firearms trafficking and other related forms of trafficking and to help address this problem.

B. Activities undertaken at the regional and subregional levels

Africa

50. ECOWAS reports that, in partnership with the West African Action Network on Small Arms and the national commissions on small arms and light weapons, its Commission conducted campaigns in ECOWAS member States aimed at raising public awareness of the negative impact of small arms and light weapons and advocating the ratification of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, adopted on 14 June 2006. Through the ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme, the ECOWAS Commission continued to strengthen its effort to institutionalize the national commissions on small arms and light weapons and to build their capacity. In this regard, the Commission has been supporting national commissions with equipment and funds for the implementation of priority activities. In addition, ECOWAS, through its Small Arms Control Programme, convened the second annual consultative meeting of national commissions on small arms and light weapons on 3 and 4 July 2008.

51. During the reporting period, the ECOWAS Commission engaged in the process of developing guidelines for the harmonization of legislation and administrative procedures on small arms and light weapons. It also developed a comprehensive draft plan of action for the implementation of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, with the support of the European Commission and the Government of Canada. The plan of action was approved by member States during the meeting of governmental experts, in Lomé from 16 to 18 June 2008.

52. The Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons reports that in December 2007, the General Assembly of the United Nations granted it observer status. In an effort to assist its 12 member States in implementing their international and regional commitments in the area of small arms and light weapons, the Regional Centre, with the financial support of Germany and the United States of America, provided its member States with an electronic machine for marking small arms and two computers each to boost their national marking and record-keeping capacity. In connection with this project, the Regional Centre organized a regional workshop on small arms and light weapons marking and record-keeping in Mombasa, Kenya, from 31 March to 4 April 2008. It also organized a seminar on man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS), in Nairobi from 1 to 2 July 2008. Finally, the Regional Centre continues to give priority to supporting the development of national action plans on small arms and light weapons among its member States.

Americas

53. The Organization of American States reports that during the reporting period, its General Assembly approved three pieces of model legislation covering the following areas: marking and tracing of firearms; legislative measures to establish criminal offences in relation to the illicit manufacturing of and/or trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials; and strengthening controls at export points. The aim of these models is to promote the adoption of legislative and other measures as part of the implementation of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials. The Second Conference of States Parties to the Convention was held in Mexico City on 20 and 21 February

2008, providing an opportunity for States to exchange experiences and to discuss challenges, needs and ways in which to strengthen the implementation of the Convention.

Europe

54. The European Union reports that on 17 March 2008 the Council of the European Union adopted a Joint Action to support European Union activities to promote, among third-world countries, the control of arms exports and the principles and criteria of the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports. The Joint Action, organized by the Presidency of the European Council, allocated €500,500 from the European Union budget to fund seminars. It brings together experts from European Union member States and other interested States in the field of arms exports control. Beneficiaries will include the countries of South-Eastern Europe and North African, Mediterranean, Eastern European and Caucasian partners of the European Neighbourhood Policy. On 18 April 2008, the most recent version of the Common Military List of the European Union, which was adopted by the Council of the European Union on 10 March 2008, was published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*. The List describes twenty-two categories of military equipment covered by the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports.[12]

55. In addition, during the reporting period, European Union member States agreed to exchange information on a confidential basis on brokering licences granted (including licences for transfer of brokered goods). This agreement enhances the information-sharing commitments of the European Union Common Position on the control of arms brokering, adopted on 23 June 2003. With regard to marking and tracing, in May 2008 the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament amended the 1991 directive on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons in order to accommodate the provisions of the United Nations Firearms Protocol. That directive contains specific provisions on marking, tracing and record-keeping within the European Community. In February 2008, the Council of the European Union adopted a Joint Action to support financially and politically three of the four regional workshops organized by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs to promote the International Tracing Instrument (see paras. 26-30 above). The workshops funded by the European Union were held in Lomé, Seoul and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

56. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) continued to promote information-sharing among its members through annual as well as one-off and confidential information exchanges. In October 2007, the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation adopted decision 11/07, requesting participating States to exchange information, on a one-off basis by 25 January 2008, on their present regulations concerning brokering activities with regard to small arms and light weapons.

57. The South-Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons reports that during the reporting period, it developed regional micro-disarmament standards and guidelines on small arms and children (RMDS/G 06.20) and on small arms and light weapons and gender

[12] http://www.consilium.europa.eu/export-controls.

(RMDS/G 06.30). In addition, it developed an Excel-based weapons destruction planning matrix to support the contents of the RMDS/G 05.20, on the destruction of small arms and light weapons, and updated RMDS/G 06.10, on the development and implementation of small arms and light weapons awareness programmes. The Clearinghouse also put in place a regional strategy on gender issues in small arms control and armed violence prevention, and carried out research into firearms and domestic violence legislation throughout the Western Balkans. This research resulted in a regional comparative study that was completed at the end of 2007.

58. In addition, the Clearinghouse helped to initiate the joint OSCE/UNDP capacity development programme for small arms and light weapons (conventional ammunition) demilitarization and safe storage for Montenegro. A weapons registration and stockpile management software, developed by the Clearinghouse, became fully functional in the Ministry of Interior of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Furthermore, the Small Arms and Light Weapons Awareness Support Pack, which provides detailed guidance on how to develop, implement and monitor small arms awareness programmes, was updated.

C. Activities undertaken by intergovernmental organizations

59. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) reports that it continued to support projects for the safe destruction of stockpiles of small arms and light weapons and ammunition through its Partnership for Peace Trust Fund policy. Since the establishment of the Trust Fund policy in September 2000, a total of 20 Trust Fund projects have been launched, of which 9 have already been successfully completed. To date, the accomplishments of the Trust Fund projects include the destruction of more than 1.5 million small arms and light weapons, 145,000 tons of munitions and abandoned explosives, 1,400 MANPADS, 530 high-altitude anti-aircraft missiles, 4.1 million landmines and 1,500 tons of dangerous chemicals, including rocket fuel (mélange). Additionally, NATO has supported reintegration programmes. To date, over 5,000 former military personnel have received training and assistance through three Trust Fund projects, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Ukraine.

60. In a new initiative, NATO allies agreed at the Bucharest summit in April 2008 to raise the profile of its policies and contributions on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, which include efforts to fully implement the Programme of Action. Separately, Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council members have agreed to expand the reach and scope of the NATO/Partnership for Peace Trust Fund mechanism to include States of the Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.[13]

61. The NATO Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and OSCE co-sponsored the Synergy Conference for Regional Organizations on the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. The Conference, held at NATO headquarters in Brussels from 28 to 30 May 2008, had as its main objectives the facilitation of synergies and the promotion of best practices

[13] The Mediterranean Dialogue was launched in 1994 and includes the member States of NATO and Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. The Istanbul Commitment Initiative was launched at the NATO Istanbul summit in September 2004.

in implementing the Programme of Action between and among regional organizations and preparations for the Third Biennial Meeting of States (see paras. 18-25 above).

62. The Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies reports that during the reporting period, participating States continued the internal notification of transfers of small arms and light weapons in the form of semi-annual notifications of arms transfers. The Wassenaar Arrangement also contributed to best practices regarding small arms and light weapons and MANPADS by publishing in 2007 a document entitled "Best practices to prevent destabilizing transfers of small arms and light weapons through air transport". From 4 to 6 December 2007, the Wassenaar Arrangement held its 2007 plenary, where Participating States agreed to update the 2002 small arms and light weapons best practices to bring them into line with the International Tracing Instrument.

63. In July 2007, INTERPOL, at one of its biennial regional conferences, the 19th African Regional Conference, in Arusha, addressed the issue of small arms and light weapons in Africa, including illicit trade in the Great Lakes region. On 10 July 2007, Somalia successfully connected to the INTERPOL secure global police communications system, I-24/7. Somalia was the last of the 186 member States of INTERPOL to join the system. With regard to support for States in tracing illicit small arms and light weapons, INTERPOL continued the development of its Weapons and Explosives Tracking System and collaborated with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs in the organization of four regional workshops to support the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument (see paras. 26-30 above).

V. Conclusions

64. The unprecedented adoption of an outcome document at the Third Biennial Meeting of States constituted a concrete reaffirmation of the commitment of Member States to the full implementation of the Programme of Action and the adoption of a more results-oriented approach to global follow-up meetings. The discussions at the Biennial Meeting emphasized the critical importance of international cooperation and assistance in all areas addressed by the Programme of Action. The meeting also highlighted the need for States to implement the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts on illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons and to put in place measures to improve the management of stockpiles.

65. During the reporting period, the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument was one of the priorities of States in the area of small arms and light weapons. The regional workshops organized by the Office for Disarmament Affairs underscored the need for continued efforts to promote the Instrument and to develop concrete projects aimed at building the capacity of States in the areas of marking, record-keeping and tracing. The workshops proved to be useful in enhancing the understanding of the provisions of the Instrument, familiarizing participants with the tracing tools available through INTERPOL and preparing for the consideration of the Instrument at the Third Biennial Meeting of States (see para. 18 above).

66. The importance of tools to facilitate the matching of assistance needs with resources has been emphasized by States as well as international, regional and civil society organizations. The Programme of Action Implementation Support System (see para. 7 above), being developed under the auspices of CASA, was welcomed by the Third Biennial Meeting of States as a useful tool in that regard. The Implementation Support System is expected to be instrumental in connecting States' needs with other States' resources. In doing so it will become the concrete tool for which the Group of Interested States — a forum that was conceived prior to the adoption of the Programme of Action — paved the way.

67. Intergovernmental organizations, including regional and subregional organizations, as well as civil society organizations, reported that they continued to play a critical role in supporting the implementation of the Programme of Action. During the reporting period these organizations implemented activities in a wide range of areas, including awareness-raising and advocacy, development of legislation, stockpile management, weapons collection and destruction, marking, and record-keeping. There has also been an increased effort to undertake joint projects involving various intergovernmental organizations and civil society and to enhance cooperation among regional and subregional organizations, as illustrated by the synergy conference referred to in paragraph 61 above.